

Testimony regarding HB 5037

Testimony by Kana Danzey

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Appropriation Committee

Feb 17, 2022

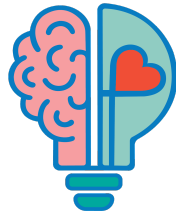
My name is Kana Danzey and I am writing today to testify against Governor Lamont's proposed Office of Early Childhood budget, and to voice my DISAPPOINTMENT, DISSATISFACTION, and DISTRESS that the governor is doing nothing to address the current financial crisis in the child care industry. If the OEC budget does not support the early childhood industry. I worry that all my hardwork and education I've built over the years will go to waste and the many children in my care will not be provided with all that my center and I have worked so hard to give them. We are asking that the final budget include substantial investment in early care and education.

I have joined this business because there is a need for children to see teachers that look like me and be provided with a proper early education from a person that genuinely loves and wants to educate them. It takes special people to do the job that we do everyday. I have been in this business going on 5 years so you can only imagine my disappointment when the pandemic happened. We were left to be essential workers with no health insurance during a very uncertain time. We already don't get paid enough for the many hats we put on throughout the day. So to be

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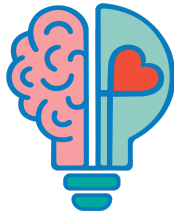


devalued in an important budget that affects many of us that was so crucial is beyond disappointing.

We are currently operating at a loss trying to provide the proper education and pay to employees. Speaking from experience, the disproportion in money trickles down to many aspects of our lives. We are being left with enough for survival. For all that we do daily it is sad to be invisible to the many we have worked so hard to help. It's obvious that the people who do choose this profession are in it for much more than the pay. It's hard to provide a good working environment and find workers ready to provide quality. When we are not properly paying them for the hard work that they do. There is a major staffing problem in the childcare industry for these exact reasons.

If we do not have the financial support, we are afraid of the centers that many, especially people of color that have worked so hard to build their centers through the many obstacles already placed before them. I can personally say that joining Play to learn Childcare and Bright Minds Learning Center has changed my life in many ways and I have seen it do the same for others. Including affordability for parents who need it bridging the gap of economic disproportions placed by gentrification and historical disadvantages we continue to fight daily. Everyone should have access to affordability and sustainability including early childcare centers owners ! We should be trusted with the work we so dedicatedly put in everyday !

This change all trickles down to the budget we were casted out of. I feel utterly let down by the place I have called home my whole life. I'm a person that KNOWS how to work hard and



always have for everything i've gotten in my life. Many things were not given to me without the proper work behind it. So I'm just questioning as to why we have done the work especially in such a crucial, uncertain time for us all to be left with absolutely nothing. My feelings are certainly beyond what my words can explain. Today, I hope as I prepare this testimony I am heard and remembered in the loudest way possible through my words. Please hear us out starting today !

Before the pandemic the child care business model was not working. Yet, many early childhood programs remained open during the early pandemic, we were there for the essential workers, we were there to support the health care workers, we took in school age children. Now we are at a breaking point. The child care industry is crumbling around us, we can't pay our staff appropriate wages and benefits, centers are closing classrooms and many providers are on the verge of closing for good. The childcare industry is crumbling around us. We are asking for more funding for childcare in the state of Connecticut. We support children's growth, the ability of parents to work, and the overall economic well being of the state. Without available and affordable child care, we will not have a strong economy.

We need you to value children, families, and the early care industry that is there to support them!

We need substantial state investment before it is too late! Thank you for considering these issues.